Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Wilson, Larry David. 1988. *Tantilla moesta*.

Tantilla moesta (Günther)

Homala cranium moestum Günther, 1863:352. Type-locality, "Province of Peten [=Depto. El Petén, Guatemala]." Holotype, British Museum (Natural History) 1946.1.9.74 (formerly 64.1. 26. 119), female, collected by Osbert Salvin, date of collection unknown (not examined by author).
Tantilla moesta: Cope, 1866:126.
Homalocranion moestum: Bocourt, 1883:583.
Tantilla moestum: Stuart, 1934:5.
Tantilla moesta moesta: Smith, 1939:33.
Tantilla moestra: Müller, 1973:13.

• **Content**. No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition and Diagnosis**. "A species of *Tantilla* with a dark brown to black dorsum and venter. The head pattern consists of a long pale band covering a variable amount of the frontal and/ or parietals and from 2 to 7 scales posterior to the parietals, thence extending laterally to merge with the pale color of the chin. Ventrals and subcaudals range from 138 to 152 and 52 to 62 respectively" (Wilson, 1982). *Tantilla moesta* may be distinguished from all congeners by having a dark brown to black dorsum and venter, a head pattern of a long, complete pale band merging without interruption into the pale color of the chin, 138-152 ventrals, and 52-62 subcaudals..

• **Descriptions**. The most complete description is that of Wilson (1982). Other descriptions are in Bocourt (1883), Günther (1863, 1895), Smith (1942), and Peters (1953). Smith (1941) noted the number of maxillary teeth.

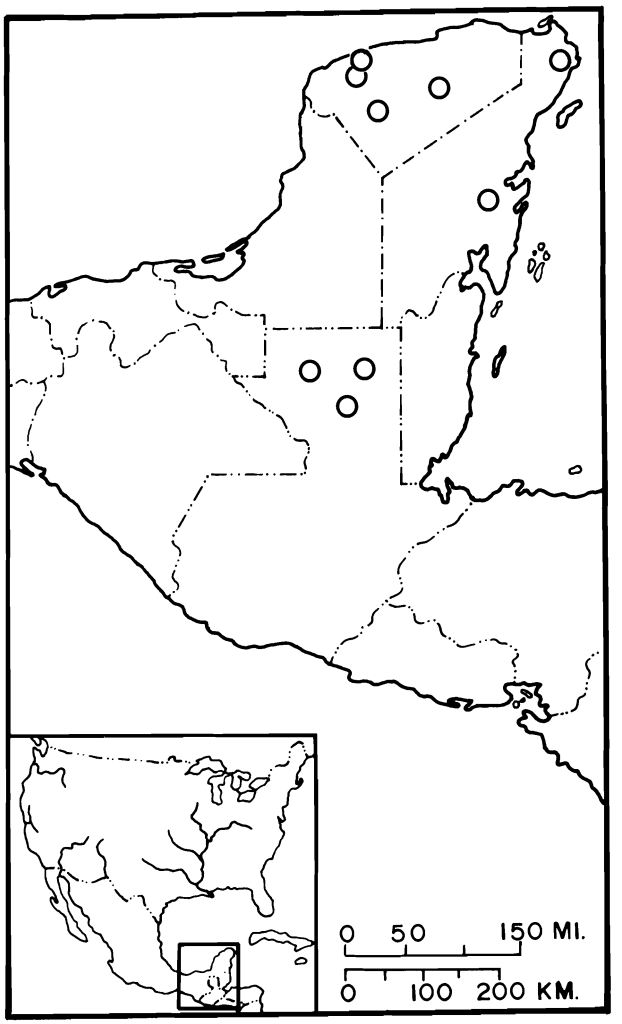
• **Illustrations**. Wilson (1982) provided black-and-white photographs of the lateral view of the head and the entire body of this snake. Bocourt (1883) and Günther (1895) published pen and ink drawings of the lateral, dorsal, and ventral views of the head and anterior body.

• **Distribution**. "Low and moderate elevations of the Yucatán Peninsula in the Mexican states of Quintana Roo and the northern portion of the Guatemalan department of El Petén" (Wilson, 1982).

• **Fossil Record**. None.

• **Pertinent Literature**. Most of what has been written about this species concerns taxonomy and distribution. The most important papers were cited in the Descriptions section. Stuart (1958) included a note on habitat and Lee (1980) discussed distributional patterns.

• **Etymology**. The name *moesta* is derived from the Latin *maestus* meaning "sad or sorrowful," apparently an allusion to the funereal coloring of this snake.



Map. Distribution of *Tantila moesta*. Open circles indicate locality records. Type-locality too vague to plot.

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